



Susan Bysiewicz
SECRETARY OF THE STATE
CONNECTICUT

For Immediate Release:
March 19, 2007

For more information:
Derek Slap: (860) 509-6255
Cell: (860) 573-2019

- NEWS RELEASE -

**PROPOSAL TO ALLOW 17 YEAR-OLD VOTING WINS
UNANIMOUS APPROVAL IN LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE**

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THREE YEARS, PROPOSAL GAINS TRACTION & NOW AWAITS
ACTION FROM GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Hartford: Sec. of the State Susan Bysiewicz is thrilled that today the Government Administration and Elections Committee voted unanimously (12-0) to approve HJ-11, a resolution that would allow thousands of 17 year-olds to vote in a primary election, so long as they turn 18 before the general election.

“For the first time in three years this proposal has made it out of committee,” said Bysiewicz. “Rep. Spallone, Sen. Meyer, and the teens from across Connecticut who joined me at our news conference last week should be commended for their leadership. Now it is up to all members of the General Assembly, Democrats and Republicans, to take a stand and enfranchise nearly 10,000 young men and women in this state.”

House Joint Resolution No. 11 states, “That article fourteenth of the amendments to the Constitution of the State be amended to authorize seventeen-year-old persons who pre-register to vote and who will attain the age of eighteen years on or before the day of a regular election to vote in a primary for such regular election.”

Despite what many assume to be the law, the United States Constitution does not deny 17 year-olds the right to vote. The 26th Amendment to the United States Constitution only states that the right of citizens who are eighteen years of age or older to vote shall not be denied by the United

States or by any State on account of age. Taking into account that the Constitution does not bar states from lowering the voting age, some states have done exactly that. In the past several years nine other states in the nation have passed measures that allow 17 year-olds to vote in primaries so long as they turn 18 by the general election. The states are; Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Mississippi, Nebraska, North Carolina, Ohio, and Virginia.

There are two ways an amendment can be made to the Connecticut Constitution. One option is that three quarters of the House and Senate approve the amendment and then it goes onto the ballot in the next general election that falls on an even numbered year. The other option is for a simple majority in both the House and Senate to approve the measure in two separate legislative sessions. If that happened, it would then go onto the ballot in the next general election that falls on an even numbered year.

-END-